



Looking Ahead!

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Thirtieth Annual Report
of the
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

1944

National Society for the
Prevention of Blindness, Inc.
1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

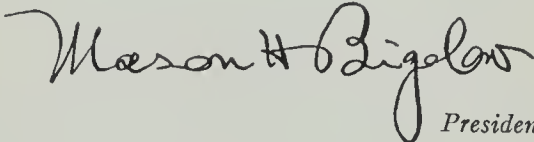
Looking Ahead!

THIRTY years have passed since the presentation of the first annual report of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. At that time, the Society, until then known as the New York State Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, became the National Committee and undertook a national program, mainly to combat ophthalmia neonatorum, which was then a major cause of blindness among children admitted to schools and institutions for the blind in the United States. Thus early, the founders were also looking forward to other opportunities for helpfulness in sight conservation. Several sight-saving classes had been established; the subject of the harmful effects of wood alcohol on the eyes was engaging attention; industrial eye hazards were recognized as a problem requiring consideration.

The work of the Society has progressed steadily year by year. The number of children in schools for the blind who lost their sight because of ophthalmia neonatorum has been reduced by 75 per cent. The number of sight-saving classes in the United States has grown to 613. Programs in industrial safety have multiplied, and improved notably.

Today the Society is waging its war on preventable blindness in industry, in the home, in the school, in the hospital, and offers its help to those whose sight is threatened in the service of their country. Its program of professional and public education has aroused doctors, nurses, safety engineers, social workers, teachers, and parents to their part in saving sight.

The original band of ten pioneers who founded the Society some three decades ago, has grown into an army of 30,000 members and donors, who through their financial support have made possible its ever broadening program. The Society with equal gratitude acknowledges its indebtedness to the numerous volunteer workers whose generous expenditure of time and professional talent has alone made possible some of its most useful projects.


President

1944 in Review

THE War and its exigencies continued to highlight the Society's program during 1944, but the general program of education has been carried on as usual through participation in institutes, conferences, national and local meetings; through use of press, radio, visual education, and literature.

Among the major projects of the year were those relating to conservation and utilization of eyesight in industry; glaucoma control; problems of partially seeing children in schools for the blind; vision testing methods; rehabilitation; and the development of local official and voluntary agencies for prevention of blindness.

Conservation and Utilization of Eyesight in Industry

War Production Board Project.—The outstanding development in the field of sight conservation in industry has been the Society's participation in the War Production Board's drive to speed up production through improvement of visual conditions in the war industries. Cooperating in this program with the War Production Board, are the U. S. Public Health Service; the War Manpower Commission; the U. S. Department of Labor, Division of Labor Standards; and the Society. To date, 7,500 plants have received copies of the *Manual and Appraisal Form on Conservation and Utilization of Eyesight in Industry*, originally prepared by the Society, and many industries have availed themselves of the offer of assistance on visual problems relating to production and safety. This special advisory service and the preparation of informational bulletins are being handled by the Society, under a non-profit contract with the War Production Board.

A study of the first 150 appraisal forms voluntarily returned by plants reveals that only 61 per cent make the pre-placement vision tests necessary for correct job assignment. More than 75 per cent of the plants where tests are made fail to have the testing done under the direction of an eye specialist, indicating lack of uniformity, and possible inaccuracy. Other facts disclosed, include: (1) more than 85 per cent of the plants fail to recheck vision of all

employees periodically; (2) more than 80 per cent make no recheck of vision of workers exposed to special hazards; (3) 92 per cent fail to recheck vision of employees with poor production records; (4) 83 per cent do not recheck vision of workers involved in accidents; and (5) 73 per cent make no rechecks where original vision test disclosed need of follow-up.

Of the plants reporting, 58 per cent indicate that they use the employee's personal reading prescription for work glasses—despite the fact that it is estimated that in 19 cases out of 20, the worker's personal reading glasses are unsuitable for the job. Only 8 per cent have prescription for work glasses written in the plant by the company examiner, although knowledge of job conditions is essential to determine such prescriptions.

Seminar on Industrial Ophthalmology.—Anticipating the need for additional industrial ophthalmologists, the Society presented a five-session Seminar in Industrial Ophthalmology. The Joint Committee on Industrial Ophthalmology of the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology cooperated in preparing the Seminar. Approximately 60 ophthalmologists registered for the course. Lecturers included leading ophthalmologists, industrial and illuminating engineers, as well as members of the staff of the Society.*

Nursing Care of Eyes in Industry.—No aspect of the Society's industrial program has received greater attention than the nursing care of eyes in industry. In conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, a conference on eye health in industry was conducted in New York City, early last October. Forty-seven nursing consultants, supervisors, and instructors, from 16 states and two Canadian provinces attended the three sessions; and there was every indication that institutes of this type would be much in demand in the future.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Concomitant with the development of the program for the utilization of eyesight in industry, has come the realization that the problem of vocational rehabilitation of those with visual handicaps, but not blind, can be solved, at least in part. If it is possible, in times of war, to utilize defective eyesight with the aid of corrective work goggles, proper lighting, and other mechanical im-

* The Proceedings will be published in 1945.

provements, why could not these principles be applied to the post-war program of providing useful work for the returning visually handicapped serviceman as well as for civilians who hitherto had not been able to realize fully their capacity for gainful employment? This point was sharply brought out by Dr. Jack Masur, acting chief medical officer, Physical Rehabilitation Section of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, in his address at the Society's Annual Meeting, early in December, 1944. "The wheels of a large program grind slowly," he said, "and it is in just such a program carried on by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness that we find the stimulus and the leadership that are indispensable for the encouragement of specific programs with high standards in our state agencies for vocational rehabilitation."

Recognizing the importance of this problem, the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation appointed a Professional Advisory Committee early in 1944, to guide it in preparing medical and social standards for the use of state rehabilitation officers. One of the Society's Advisory Committee, Dr. Purman Dorman, a leading ophthalmologist of Seattle, Washington, was appointed to this Committee, to consider the problems of the partially seeing.

The Society was also called upon to make suggestions related to local medical and social groups which might be available to assist the Army Rehabilitation Program which serves the returned handicapped servicemen assigned to Army hospitals. An officer in the Surgeon-General's Office, an ophthalmologist, was assigned to work especially on the eye problem, and sought the advice of the Society.

Glaucoma

Exhibit Wins Award.—Important among the Society's activities in the advancement of its glaucoma program, was the assembling of a permanent glaucoma exhibit. The Society's Committee on Glaucoma, of which Dr. Mark J. Schoenberg was chairman, was fortunate in obtaining the valuable cooperation of other ophthalmologists in assembling this exhibit which covers the various aspects of the glaucoma problem. It was shown at three important conferences during the year and received the "First Award for Excellence in Presentation in Ophthalmology" at the meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, in Chicago.

Demonstration Glaucoma Clinic.—Under the auspices of the Society's Committee on Glaucoma, the demonstration glaucoma clinic at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, New York City, was continued during 1944. This demonstration, as may be recalled, was initiated for the following purposes: (1) to determine the best routine examination to insure the earliest diagnosis; (2) to demonstrate the need for frequent examinations and the value of various methods of treatment; (3) to devise special record forms to obtain uniformity; (4) to study the value of training volunteer assistants; (5) to provide an observation and training center for professional groups interested in glaucoma. Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City and several other clinics have expanded their eye services to include more detailed attention to glaucoma patients. This local demonstration has aided and influenced the development of a number of other state and local activities related to the control of glaucoma.

Tonometer Checking.—The services of the tonometer checking station located at the Society's office, was continued until June, 1944. During the six months' period, instruments from ophthalmologists and hospitals located in 15 states, the District of Columbia, and Nova Scotia, Canada, were examined. The Committee on Standardization of Tonometers of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, under whose sponsorship tonometer checking stations are being established, has plans to transfer this station to another satisfactory location in New York City.

The Eyes of School Children

The Partially Seeing Child.—Courses for the preparation of teachers and supervisors of partially seeing children were given during the summer sessions of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City; University of California at Los Angeles; and Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, in co-operation with the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. At the present time need is felt for county supervisors who are prepared to give the necessary information and help to teachers in small communities and rural districts who have partially seeing children in their groups. This type of service, as well as the establishment of special classes, is essential to provide educational facilities to meet the needs of the 50,000 partially seeing children in the United States.

The Society continued its participation in the Committee to Study Problems of Children with Severe Visual Handicaps. Children with some vision in two State Schools for the Blind were studied in order to learn something of their special educational, medical and social needs. In one of the schools it was found that 43 children have eyesight: 25 of these should continue in the school for the blind, but should be taught by methods which make use of their remaining sight; 9 children were found to be able to take their places in classes for the partially seeing; 9 children were recommended to be temporarily continued in the school for the blind until additional medical correction is made available. As a result of the study in this state, efforts are being made to provide more adequate educational and social facilities.

Vision Testing.—During 1944, the Society's committee on vision testing was completely reorganized on a national basis, to include representatives from the fields of federal and state educational and health agencies, as well as from the nursing and ophthalmological fields. The report of the previous committee, published briefly in the *Sight-Saving Review*, was widely requested by state and municipal health and educational departments, indicating a vital interest in and need for information on this subject. The newly organized committee has these needs under consideration.

Some Facts in Brief

Society's Film Makes a Good Showing.—Forty prints of "Eyes for Tomorrow," the Society's new sound motion picture released in March, 1944, were purchased by prevention of blindness agencies, health or welfare departments, university film libraries and others, representing 20 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. Reports received from 32 of the 40 agencies having the film indicate that with the Society's 30 loan showings, there were 600 showings reaching more than 60,000 people.

1944 Leslie Dana Award.—Miss Linda Neville, known as virtually a one-woman prevention of blindness organization in Kentucky, was awarded the Leslie Dana Gold Medal for her outstanding achievements in prevention of blindness in her state.

"Education and Health of the Partially Seeing Child."—This volume by the Society's Associate Director, Mrs. Winifred Hathaway, went into a second edition, and word was received that a separate British edition was published in England by Messrs. Humphrey Milford.

Society Honors Its President.—In recognition of his devoted service as head of the organized movement for protection of eyesight and the conservation of vision, Mason H. Bigelow, President of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, was presented with an illuminated scroll by the Society's Board of Directors, at the 30th Annual Meeting, December 14, 1944.

Radio Transcriptions Widely Used.—The Society's two fifteen-minute radio programs, entitled "The Ultimate Victory is in Sight" and "A Stitch in Time," were broadcast during 1944 by 176 local stations (a total of 352 broadcasts) in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

Executive Director Honored.—The Society's Executive Director, Mrs. Eleanor Brown Merrill, was made President of the National Health Council, in 1944.

Society's Publications Much in Demand.—More than a quarter of a million pamphlets on sight conservation were distributed by the Society during the past year, reaching virtually every state in the union as well as many foreign countries.

Summary of Finances

EXPENSES DURING 1944

Office Maintenance	\$23,148.13	
Salaries	92,183.29	
Accounting and Auditing	2,249.96	
Field Service.	5,113.38	
Publications and Exhibits	13,593.84	
Distribution Costs	14,652.80	
Meetings and Courses	878.68	
Cooperative Projects	5,108.82	
Annuities and Insurance	8,054.84	
Vision Testing Charts	1,299.98	
Films	<u>3,294.68</u>	\$169,578.40

INCOME DURING 1944—Operating Account

Donations		
New	\$18,864.68	
Renewal	109,047.48	
Memberships		
New	698.50	
Renewal	17,865.84	\$146,476.50
Income, Endowment and Reserve Fund	15,616.89	
Income, Wendel Foundation	9,334.72	
Income, Trust Funds (not administered by the Society)	2,579.51	
Sale of Films, Sight-Saving Review, other publications and honoraria	10,131.84	
Other Income	<u>1,780.00</u>	
	\$185,919.46	
Transferred to Reserve Fund	<u>16,341.06</u>	<u>\$169,578.40</u>

Total resources at December 31, 1943		\$469,718.64
Income in excess of expenses, 1944	\$16,341.06	
Legacies, Special Gifts, etc., net, received in 1944 and placed in Reserve, Endowment and Special and Designated Funds	<u>28,323.33</u>	
	\$44,664.39	
Loss on sale of securities, etc., net	<u>1,865.95</u>	42,798.44
Total resources at December 31, 1944		<u>\$512,517.08*</u>

* This includes mortgages, securities and real estate at book value. It does not include the following: Trust Funds not administered by the Society, aggregating \$70,000.00; 1/40th share in the unliquidated properties of the Wendel Foundation; 1/8th share in the unliquidated and undistributed assets of the Mary L. C. Earle Estate (consisting principally of country real estate of uncertain value); and the Society's interest in various estates in course of administration.

The foregoing statement is based on the report of Barrow, Wade, Guthrie and Company, by whom the accounts of the Society were audited. A copy of the report will be sent to anyone requesting it.

The Executive Director is required by the Board of Directors to submit a detailed statement of proposed expenditures and to account for all sums spent in accordance with budget appropriations. Vouchers are on file for every expenditure.

The Society's main service, including preparation and distribution of material, such as vision testing charts, films, and publications, is rendered through the work of an executive staff. This staff is composed of professional personnel qualified to deal with a wide range of scientific and technical facts and procedures, and competent to work with other agencies and individuals through which the movement for sight conservation may be furthered. Secretarial and clerical assistants comprise the remainder of the office force. During 1944, the number on the monthly payroll averaged 34 persons. Officers and directors receive no salaries.

The total of \$146,476.50 received in annual contributions represents 29,522 gifts from approximately 27,000 persons, and indicates a growing interest on the part of the public.

Net receipts from legacies, and designated and endowment gifts in 1944 were \$28,323.33.

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of Dollars
for its corporate purposes.

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

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* Deceased February, 1945.

